

# Trading Up from VCT: Options in Resilient Tile

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Johnsonite's high performance resilient flooring Optima with iQ Construction pictured here at the Alliance Community Hospital in Alliance, Ohio.

Resilient floor tile has been specified for commercial interiors for decades. Yet, these products have not made it into Main Street commercial applications on a regular basis. Vinyl composition tile (vct) and its predecessors va tile and asphalt tile have been around for so long that many facility managers and flooring retailers often just select vct samples when thinking of hard surface options.



Forbo Marmoleum Tile installed at a high school (Photo by Beth Singer Photography).

Floor tile is an inexpensive product to install, and it wears pretty well in a variety of traffic areas. Floor tile products like solid vinyl tile, rubber flooring, linoleum and cork tile are just a few of the options being explored as trade-ups from vct. These products may cost more up front than vct, but they offer better looks, environmental benefits and often lower maintenance make the trade-up easy to sell a designer or an end-user.

One of the first vct step-up products is higher vinyl content vct. These products are being marketed as high performance vinyl or vinyl enhanced floor tile. The characteristics of high performance vinyl or vinyl enhanced floor tile are the availability of larger sizes and more realistic looks compared to standard vct. This new group of products may also offer easier maintenance options.



Marbelized resilient flooring from Roppe.

Solid vinyl tile (svt) has been an increasingly popular design option in a variety of spaces, especially in health care and retail stores because of the combine improved performance with realistic renditions of natural materials including wood planks, stone, slate, tile, glass and any number of other visuals. In addition, a number of products are available in "non vinyl" or "PVC Free" formulations, which require different installation and maintenance procedures than vinyl products.

Rubber flooring continues to be an important commercial resilient product because of quietness, slip resistance and lower maintenance costs. This is not just the "coin" raised circular design with which you may be familiar. In fact, traditional marbelized smooth rubber has been making a comeback recently in more updated colors. This style of product has been around for over 60 years, and is historically one of the toughest and most durable flooring options for high traffic areas.

Recycled rubber flooring and rubber/cork tile are also now included in this category. Make sure to present recycled rubber flooring and other rubber/cork tile products to specifiers and building owners interested in placing these renewable products in their "green" building projects.



Centiva Even and Victory series seen here at a HOM Furniture store in Minneapolis.

Linoleum products continue to make a comeback into the marketplace after their return in the early 1990s. Natural linoleum is made from linseed oil, pine rosin, ground cork, wood flour, and a jute backing - like my great grandfather and both grandfathers used to sell. Linoleum is hot for "green" design projects. Installed and maintained correctly, "lino" is a tough and durable product that can be used in almost any traffic area.



A combination of Stratica's Antique Rosewood and Elm seen here at the Fresno Surgery Center in Fresno, Calif. The manufacturer notes that this resilient flooring is non-PVC and chlorine free, as well as eco-polymeric. The company notes that it is well suited for a health care facility.

Cork is another resilient flooring option that is seeing increased use because of its "green" story, its softness, sound and heat insulating characteristics and unique look. Cork floors have a lot of the same characteristics as wood flooring with regard to handling, installation and finishing.

The availability of increasingly interesting designs in homogeneous cork tile (with color all the way through), makes the longest lasting cork flooring products available in an ever widening variety of designs and colors that can be sanded and refinished like wood floors, and will last for generations.

New products are always being introduced to the vct category such as "quartz tile," new "bio-based" composition tile and other types of composition products. These new products are said to handle like vct. And, with the continued increase of product offering and demand from specifiers, the resilient tile category continues to be an important part of the commercial flooring marketplace.

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